

Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Person

**Quarter 1 – Module 6:
Methods of Philosophizing**

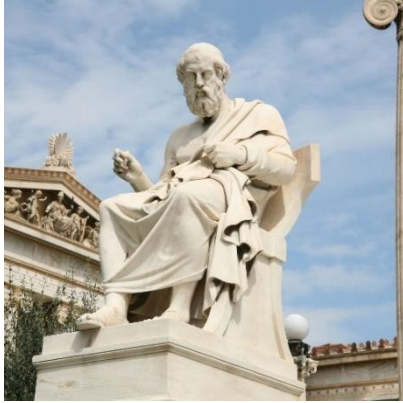
Lesson

6

**Evaluation of Truth from
Opinions in Different
Situations Using the
Methods of Philosophizing**



What is It



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The Allegory of the Cave was written by Plato. It was one of the selections in his “The Republic”, a very long dialogue 400 or 500 pages. The dialogue was written around 380 B.C. One of the main characters in the dialogue was Socrates, the teacher of Plato.

An allegory is a kind of a story where the characters or the events in the story are meant to symbolize or represent something else (Kleiner). Something in the story represents something in reality.

The Allegory of the Cave

- ❧ Plato described prisoners inside a cave, where they are chained facing a wall.
- ❧ Behind and above the prisoners are people carrying objects along a road and beyond this road is a burning fire.
- ❧ The burning fire would cast the shadows of the people with their objects to the wall in front of the prisoners.
- ❧ Consequently, the prisoners could see only the images or shadows cast by these objects.
- ❧ Once a prisoner is set free and would be forced to turn around, he will realize that the cause of the shadows were the people on the road with the objects they carry and the fire.
- ❧ But if he is further forced and dragged out from the cave, he will realize that the sun is the source of whatever is true and good for all things, thus his soul is enlightened towards the intelligible world.
- ❧ Once the vision of the good is attained from the sunlight, he will be unwilling and reluctant to descend and go back to the cave or the world of darkness again.

Significant Analysis of the Allegory

- ❧ Sun refers to the truth, the first principle of everything else
- ❧ The prisoners are we.
- ❧ The people holding puppets are people holding power and shaping our opinions, beliefs, and attitudes.
- ❧ Presence of the two worlds: the base of the cave and the world outside of the cave.
- ❧ The world inside the cave is the sensible world or the physical world.
- ❧ The world outside the cave is the intellectual world or the world of ideas.

Philosophical Points

- ☞ This process of the enlightenment of the soul or the mind's eye represents its ascent "from the world of opinion" inside the cave with its beliefs and illusions, "to the world of real knowledge" where the real objects of knowledge could be found, "THE FORMS AND IDEAS".
- ☞ Plato believed that mental reality, the world of ideas and of intelligence is more real than the material world where things change all the time and they come and go. Therefore, no reality is found in a changing world. Like shadows, they appear then they disappear. But the idea, for instance of a circle remains even if there's no physical object representing a circle, as long as there's a mind to think it.
- ☞ The physical world is the world of conventional opinions. People simply accept is shown to them. They are passive observers and they don't try to question it.
- ☞ The process of getting out of the cave is the process of education. By education, people may start to question the belief that he has.
- ☞ In the process, we experience confusion, i.e., from going out of darkness to light, and from getting into the darkness from light.
- ☞ The power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already, and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge, the mind, can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming to that of being.